



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

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State OES, California Alliance for Response Continue Effort to Preserve California's Treasures

Series of Forums in San Diego and Los Angeles Aim to Strengthen Ties Among Cultural Institutions, First Responders and Emergency Managers

SACRAMENTO – First responders, emergency managers and members of the San Diego County cultural heritage community re-united today at the El Prado at Balboa Park to continue their efforts to protect priceless pieces of art, historic artifacts and other treasures from damage following disasters. The forum was a continuation of state's initial series of "California Alliance for Response" forums that began last September.

The series, sponsored by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and other members of the California Alliance for Response, concludes Thursday at the Skirball Center in Los Angeles. Last month, approximately 200 people attended similar forums in Sacramento and San Francisco.

"Leaders of cultural institutions and emergency managers must plan and train together in order to protect priceless artifacts following a disaster," said OES Director Henry Renteria. "These forums give both sides an opportunity to share information and develop best practices to utilize during a disaster.

"Our first responders need to know what is inside these institutions, while at the same time the institutions need to understand how we respond to emergencies," added Renteria.

Discussions and demonstrations featured today focused on emergency preparedness for special exhibitions such as "The Dead Sea Scrolls," the establishment of incident command posts, the development and conduct of exercises, the protection of key cultural resources, the use of community emergency response team (CERT) members and other volunteers, as well as an overview of mitigation grant programs and planning.

For decades California has been considered a leader in disaster response by developing key tools for first responders and emergency managers, including the Standardized Emergency Management System, which was the model for the new National Incident Management System.

Renteria credited other members of the California Alliance for Response – the California Preservation Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force and the Cultural Property Protection Group – for working with the four communities to organize the forum.

"The success of the California Alliance for Response program in such a short time wouldn't be possible without the collaborative effort of the representatives of California Preservation Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, the Cultural Property Protection Group, local governments and the institutions that house our state's treasures," he said. "Their work on these workshops exemplifies the importance of strong relationships between the public and private sectors in preserving our heritage."

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